

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE RESOLUTION 769

Sponsors: Senators Berger and Ford (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Calendar 6/4/2025

June 3, 2025

1 A SENATE RESOLUTION HONORING ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE, A
2 TRAILBLAZING PUBLIC SERVANT.

3 Whereas, Elizabeth Hanford Dole is a distinguished American politician, attorney,
4 and public servant whose career spans five decades in multiple presidential administrations and
5 the United States Senate. She played a pioneering role in shaping public policy, breaking barriers
6 for women in leadership, and advocating for social causes; and

7 Whereas, Elizabeth Hanford Dole was born on July 29, 1936, in Salisbury, North
8 Carolina. She was raised in a traditional Southern family that emphasized education and civic
9 responsibility. She attended Duke University, where she earned a degree in political science in
10 1958. Demonstrating both academic excellence and leadership skills, she went on to study law
11 at Harvard University, earning her Juris Doctor in 1965. At Harvard Law School, Elizabeth was
12 one of only a few women in her class, reflecting the challenges she would face in a
13 male-dominated field. Her legal education laid the foundation for a career that would blend law,
14 government service, and politics; and

15 Whereas, Elizabeth Hanford Dole's career in public service began in the 1960s when
16 she worked for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. She later served as a consumer
17 advocate and a staff member of the White House Office of Consumer Affairs. Her national
18 prominence grew when she joined the Nixon and Ford administrations in various capacities. Her
19 reputation as a capable and articulate leader led to her appointment as a member of the Federal
20 Trade Commission under President Richard Nixon; and

21 Whereas, in 1983, President Ronald Reagan appointed Elizabeth Hanford Dole as the
22 Secretary of Transportation, making her the first woman to hold the position. During her tenure
23 in that office, she was instrumental in enforcing seatbelt and airbag regulations, enacting 21 as
24 the legal drinking age, and advancing transportation safety initiatives, which has saved over
25 563,000 lives to date with a projected 20,000 per year going forward. Under President George
26 H.W. Bush, she served as Secretary of Labor from 1989 to 1990, where she focused on workplace
27 safety and skills development; and

28 Whereas, after leaving government service in 1991, Elizabeth Hanford Dole became
29 the president of the American Red Cross and the second woman to lead the organization since
30 its founder in 1881. She held this position for eight years. During her time in that role, she
31 modernized the organization and emphasized improving its blood collection and disaster
32 response systems. Her leadership revitalized the institution, ensuring it remained an effective
33 humanitarian organization; and

34 Whereas, Elizabeth Hanford Dole successfully ran for election to the U.S. Senate
35 from North Carolina in 2002. She served the State admirably in that capacity from 2003 to 2009.
36 As a senator, she focused on military affairs, veterans' issues, and healthcare, reflecting her
37 commitment to public service and national security; and



Whereas, Elizabeth Hanford Dole was married to Robert Joseph "Bob" Dole, a longtime U.S. Senator from Kansas and the 1996 Republican presidential nominee, until his death in 2021. The couple was regarded as a political power duo, supporting each other's careers while maintaining their own distinguished identities in public service; and

Whereas, beyond Elizabeth Hanford Dole's political career, she founded the Elizabeth Dole Foundation in 2012, which focuses on supporting military caregivers. Over the past decade, she and the Foundation have empowered, supported, and honored the nation's 14.3 million military caregivers: the spouses, parents, family members, and friends who care for America's wounded, ill, or injured veterans. The Elizabeth Dole Act, passed in 2024 and spearheaded by the Foundation, strengthens caregiver support at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, establishes a user-friendly resource center, and expands VA Home-Based Community Services nationwide. Her work in this area highlights her dedication to the well-being of those who serve our country and their families; and

Whereas, Elizabeth Hanford Dole has received numerous honors and awards throughout her lifetime in recognition of her contributions to public service, leadership, and humanitarian efforts. Some of the most notable honors include: the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2024), which recognized her lifelong public service, National Women's Hall of Fame Induction (1995), which recognized her trailblazing career in government and public service, Public Welfare Medal (2004), which was awarded by The National Academy of Sciences for her leadership at the American Red Cross and dedication to public service, Virginia Military Institute Distinguished Service Award (2007), which honored her advocacy on behalf of military families and veterans; and numerous honorary degrees from universities such as Duke University, Harvard University, and the University of North Carolina, recognizing her contributions to law, government, and humanitarian work; and

Whereas, Elizabeth Hanford Dole's career has been marked by numerous firsts and groundbreaking achievements. From being one of the first women to graduate from Harvard Law School to becoming a United States Senator and leading major federal agencies, she has paved the way for future generations of women in leadership. Her contributions to government, philanthropy, and public service ensure that her legacy will endure for years to come; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

SECTION 1. The Senate wishes to honor Elizabeth Hanford Dole, a distinguished North Carolinian and former United States Senator, for her many years of public service and desires to express its sincere gratitude for all that she has contributed to our State and nation.

SECTION 2. The Principal Clerk shall transmit a copy of this resolution to Elizabeth Hanford Dole.

SECTION 3. This resolution is effective upon adoption.